

FY21 Alter Amendment #2 (EMS)

Sponsors: CMs Alter, Ellis, Harper-Madison, Pool, and Tovo

Strategic Outcome(s): Public Safety / Health & Environment

Supporting EMS during COVID-19 and beyond

Austin's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Department medics are responsible for responding to medical emergencies throughout the City, and have faced resource and FTE constraints while doing so. These challenges have existed for years, but have become especially clear during the coronavirus pandemic.

In order to support our medical first responders during COVID-19 and through the coming years, we must invest in purchasing ambulances and associated equipment (as well as associated FTEs), staff up our Paramedic Consult Line, increase the number of Communications Specialists, and add commander FTEs to ensure adequate supervision of the broader EMS system. At a minimum, the following investments are necessary to support our EMS workers as they battle the pandemic and seek to meet growing needs in Austin.

Details

Add two 24-hour Ambulances

One-time Costs

\$954,376 for 2 ambulances, related equipment & uniforms

2 full time ambulance staff

1 Full Time Ambulance online in October 2020

\$1,135,698 for 12 FTEs

1 Full Time Ambulance online in January 2021

\$894,218 for 12 FTEs

These ambulances will cover the increasing call volume in the central core of Austin.

Increase Paramedic Consult Line Staff

8 Field Clinical Specialists for Consult Line in October

\$798,275 for 8 FTEs online in October 2020 plus one time costs of \$28,000

The Paramedic Consult Line extends triage to people with COVID-19 symptoms. To date, the line has taken 5,000 COVID-19 related calls, allowing our medics to make better PPE decisions. After COVID-19, these paramedics will help provide more appropriate triage to get the right resources to the community.

Communication Specialists

4 Communication Specialists online in January 2021

\$308,650 for 4 FTEs plus one time costs of \$14,000

Currently, Clinical Specialists are forced to monitor too many calls at a time, making it difficult for medics who need immediate assistance to receive it. Adding 4 FTEs will create a new Medical Control channel so that Communication Medics will have a more manageable call volume to monitor.

Command District**5 Field Commanders (District Command 7) online in January 2021**

\$497,411 for 5 FTEs plus one-time costs of \$265,930

At current staffing levels, our commanders are not currently able to supervise the number of ambulances and provide the decontamination and other responsibilities we have tasked them with.

EMS Minimum Request Summary (FY 2021 Cost)

	FTE's	One-Time Costs	FTE Salaries (FY21)	First Year Cost
(2) 24 Hour Ambulances (12 FTE's October 2020, 12 FTEs January 2021)	24.00	\$954,376	\$2,029,916	\$2,984,292
Consult Line (C4) - 8 Clinical Specialist Field	8.00	\$28,000	\$798,275	\$826,275
4 Clinical Specialist Comm	4.00	\$14,000	\$308,650	\$322,650
5 Commanders (District Command 7) + Truck and Equipment	5.00	\$265,930	\$497,411	\$763,341
TOTALS	41.00	\$1,262,306	\$3,634,252	\$4,896,558

Note: Certain FTEs will begin in January 2021, therefore salary costs will increase by the remaining months in the next fiscal year. If we accounted for 12 months for every FTE in FY 21, the FTE cost would be \$4,200,514. Additionally, in FY22, the FTE salaries will increase by 1% according to the EMS contract.

Note on funding sources: All one-time costs (and likely some salary) may be eligible for federal CARES, FEMA and/or other COVID-19 spending framework funds. The \$1,262,306 in one-time costs are for vehicles and related equipment, and at least the vehicles can be purchased through contractual obligation (KO) which could spread over \$1.2 million of the one-time costs over multiple years if COVID related funds are not available.

REIMAGINING PUBLIC SAFETY – Additional Investments

As we continue to reimagine what public safety looks like in our City, we believe we should consider additional investments in EMS, including but not limited to **5 additional community health paramedics** to assist our neighbors experiencing homelessness, and **2 additional demand ambulances** to support growing needs throughout the City, and **additional support staff as needed** to ensure the effectiveness of the new investments.